British Waterways London

ISSUE 8 - SEPTEMBER 2005

TOURISM AFLOAT

WATERWAY NEWS FOR TOURISM OPERATORS

2012 AND BEYOND OLYMPIC UPDATE AND OPPORTUNITIES

Following the announcement in July that London had successfully bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games, planning work is now underway to build the venues needed for the greatest show on earth and create a valued legacy for east London.

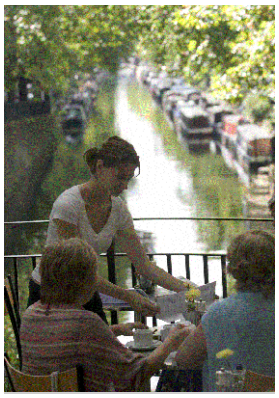
British Waterways will play its part to make sure that the waterways provide much more than just a back-drop to the sporting facilities. In particular we believe that the Bow Back Rivers, which wrap around the Olympic stadium have a strong role to play in the build up to the Games, the event itself and the long-term legacy for the area.

A recent study has shown that a massive 7,000 tonnes of construction materials, waste and recyclates could be moved in and out of the Olympic Zone by barge every day - helping to take up to 87,000 lorries off local roads each year. As well as the environmental benefits, British Waterways' plans would help increase leisure opportunities around the Olympic park through the development of marinas and moorings.

The plans also provide an opportunity to restore the mill wheels at Three Mills to generate hydro-electricity and establish the area as one of the most important sites to interpret the UK's 18th century milling heritage.

It is something of an understatement to say that the Games will transform a huge swathe of the east end of London and attract unprecedented numbers of visitors, homes and jobs. From a tourism development perspective, it will create opportunities for exciting new waterway related businesses such as hire boats and floating restaurants and facilities like cycle hire, waterside pubs, cafes and hotels. British Wwaterways plans to protect and enhance the existing valuable wildlife sites and fascinating heritage of the area and create a place where people will want to live, work, play and visit.

BWL LAUNCHES WATERWAYS BUSINESS BAROMETER



Following an unsettling summer for London businesses, British Waterways will be conducting a survey of the waterside tourism industry in support of Ukinbound (formerly BITOA) the official trade body representing the inbound tourism industry in the UK.

Ukinbounds's monthly Business Barometer gives a valuable insight into visitor numbers and destinations in London. Information collated by British Waterways London will be combined with data collected from people sensors located along the network to give a clearer picture of visitor patterns to the waterways and how this corresponds with London-wide figures. The aim of collating this information is to supply businesses with useful information for their business planning and forecasting.

Any information gathered will remain confidential and is sent to participating tourism businesses as an overall figure. All businesses will be contacted by the end of the year with details of how to get involved.

INDUSTRY COMMENT

2005 was beginning to look like an exceptional year for London's tourist industry with a 13.8% increase in visitor numbers for the six months and a 14.3% increase in spend. Following the July bombings the outlook changed with an immediate fall in visitor numbers. Visit London assesses the implications for London's £74 billion tourism industry, what the future holds and what they can do to address it.

Latest research prepared for the Tourism Industry Emergency Response (TIER) group confirms that, despite the 7 and 21 July incidents in the capital, London and the UK's visitor economies are still expected to see overall growth in the long term. However, there is real concern for forward bookings and revenues for the rest of the year and evidence of dispersal of visitors to the rest of the UK .

The industry remains confident about the future of Britain's tourism industry and following the strong start to the year, overseas visitors arrivals are still expected to grow by 6% in London alone with spending likely to increase by 8%.

Visit London has also conducted extensive consumer research in domestic markets. The UK audience show extremely positive attitudes towards London, claiming it is a buzzing, cosmopolitan and dynamic city. Many families say they will visit London in the future, but are still hesitant about visiting London at the moment.

A number of campaigns have been launched:

* Visit London conducted a direct marketing campaign during August aimed at encouraging Londoners out and about;
* Visit London launched its "London in September" campaign, including 1.2 million copies of a 36-page mini-guide and a special visitlondon.com website packed with reasons to enjoy London throughout September;
* in partnership with the Mayor's Office an extension of this activity is planned, aimed initially at London and the South East; and
* internationally, Visit London is launching a multi-million pound marketing campaign across the USA , and in London's key European markets - France, Germany , Spain , Italy , Ireland and the Netherlands in September. Media will include radio, online, print and magazines and billboards

visit LONDON

INFORMATION CENTRE FOR PADDINGTON

A floating visitor information centre will open in Paddington in January 2006 following planning consent from Westminster City council.

British Waterways is building a 60ft long, traditional broadbeamed boat with a stylishly modern interior marrying modern and traditional design as reflected the surrounding area of Regency style housing and modern office developments.

The information centre will provide information for anglers, boaters, cyclists and walkers on a stretch of waterway that attracts around 400,000 visits a year. Staff will also recommend local attractions and public transport options.

"We're very excited about the new information centre which we hope will be a fantastic resource to visitors and local residents to the area" said Donna Kelly, customer service co-ordinator, British Waterways London

WALK THE WATERSIDE

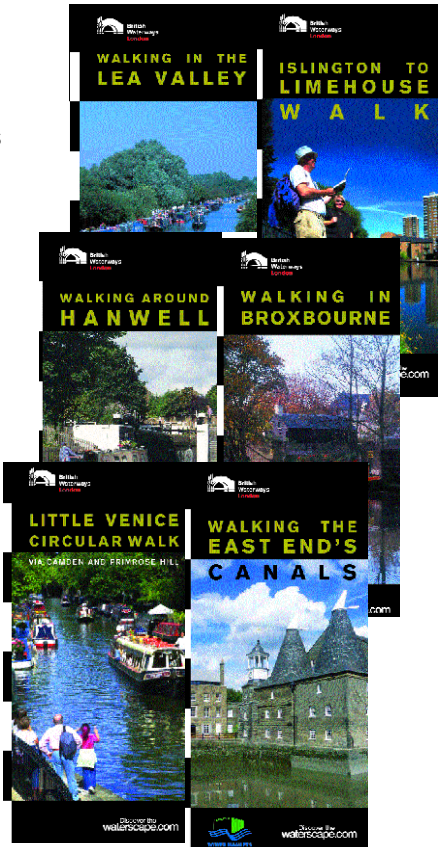
This summer, British Waterways launched a 'Walk the Waterside' campaign aimed at encouraging visitors and Londoners to walk the capital's towpaths.

Six new self guided walking leaflets were unveiled at a reception in the Britain & London Visitor Centre on 18 July followed by a week long exhibition promoting the walks to visitors.

Visitors to the stand were encouraged to enter a daily free prize draw sponsored by the Cotswold Outdoor Company and with prizes of backpacks, pedometres, water bottles and other goodies.

10,000 people visited the centre during the week

A poster campaign and DLR advertising was used to support the campaign and ran throughout the summer.



SANDCASTLES 'N' SKYSCRAPERS

35,000 people filled Docklands West India Quay over the August bank holiday weekend for the second FunQuay Beach Weekend hosted by British Waterways and X Leisure. Thousands of children made sandcastles under the Canary Wharf skyline on London's only beach made from 20 tonnes of sand imported into the capital.

As well as the beach, entertainment included the best of international street theatre, a Caribbean steel band, children's funfair and world dance stage. The Museum in Docklands also offered free entry all weekend.

CYCLISTS ASKED TO FOLLOW CODE

Following the July bombings, more Londoners have jumped on their bikes to commute to work. Although British Waterways applauds this healthy option the towpaths aren't always suitable for commuting and conflict between pedestrians and cyclists are increasing.

British Waterways recently held a Cycle Awareness Day during the peak commuting hours on the Regent's Canal towpath in Islington to address this issue. Towpath cyclists were stopped and made aware that they must obtain a cycling permit and follow the code of conduct issued by British Waterways.

"We stopped over 200 people during the cycle awarenes day and the majority were supportive and considerate cyclists. Typically it's a handful of selfish people who spoil it for everyone," said Louise Fishleigh, recreation manager British Waterways. *"We are working hard to come up with a solution and welcome suggestions from anyone that can balance the needs of all our users."*

Permits can be downloaded from www.waterscape.com

CASH BOOST FOR LONDON'S TOWPATHS

London's towpaths are shortly to be given a boost with a major upgrade as a result of £850,000 invested by Transport for London to improve accessibility and open up the routes for everyone. The four-month programme of works started in September and will revitalise over four miles of towpath in four boroughs.

Forty years ago, London's towpaths were private property, accessible to only a few. Today British Waterways' 100 miles of towpaths in the capital receive almost 16.5 million visits a year and offer an increasingly popular green route for walkers, cyclists, joggers and anglers, as well as an important wildlife corridor.

"Our network of towpaths provide traffic-free routes across the capital for walkers, cyclists, joggers, anglers and boaters," said British Waterways' environment and heritage manager Mike Manuel.*"The works that we are carrying out are part of an ongoing programme of improvements to make our towpaths safer, more attractive and accessible for the thousands of people who use them every day."*

SAFER TOWPATHS IN CAMDEN

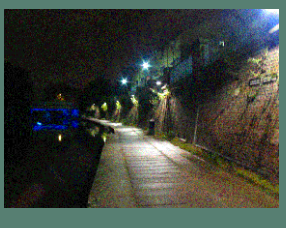
A half-mile stretch of the Regent's Canal through Camden has been the subject of a £250,000 community safety project, funded by British Waterways and the London Borough of Camden, in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, Thames 21, Camden Town Street Warden Service, Camden Lock Market and other local businesses.

The safety measures follow feed-back and consultation with regular canal users, crime prevention advisors, local residents and the Metropolitan Police. They include specially designed lighting for ¼-mile of towpath and eight bridges, as well as graffiti cleaning, CCTV cameras, increased patrolling of the canal by street wardens and the police, planting schemes, new signs at access points, fencing-off hidden corners and replacing walls with railings at access points.

Mark Blackwell, leisure development manager for British Waterways London, explains:

"Inspired by successful canalside lighting schemes in Birmingham, the lighting is part of a raft of measures we're undertaking with our partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime around the popular Camden Lock area. By working together we have created something really special which I'm certain will help make Camden a safer, cleaner and more enjoyable place to live, work and visit."

British Waterways and London Borough of Camden are now planning further improvements for the canal in Camden.



NEW EDUCATION CENTRE OPENED IN TOTTENHAM

Thanks to funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, a new community facilities centre has opened at Stonebridge Lock on the River Lee in Tottenham. The Stonebridge Lock Waterside Centre includes a permanent base for Haringey Youth Paddlers canoe club, showers and laundry for boaters, a meeting room for community use and public toilets for visitors to Tottenham Marshes and the River Lee towpath.

In June and again at the end of September, as part of British Waterways' education programme, a week of activities took place at the centre for children from primary schools in Haringey and Waltham Forest. Following a water safety talk, the children enjoyed canoeing with Haringey Youth Paddlers and explored the marshes and riverside environment with Lee Valley Regional Park Authority's Youth & Schools Service.

Elaine Stanley, British Waterways education officer, explains: "The new waterside centre provides an excellent base for special events for schools and other community groups, as well as day-to-day facilities for people visiting the River Lee and Tottenham Marshes. Both British Waterways and Lee Valley Park Regional Authority are keen to ensure children know how to stay safe near water whilst also having fun and learning how to respect the fantastic natural environment of the marshes next to the water. "

Over the last four years 10,000 children from 100 schools, spanning 13 boroughs, have enjoyed days out on the water through British Waterways' education programme.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

• Spooky Halloween Boat Trips
Saturday 29 October, Little Venice
Dress in your halloween costume for a boat trip to Kensal Green Cemetery. Halloween craft activities for children are included.

• British Waterways London want to hear about any events you are running in 2006 and will publish the information online. Please contact Rebecca Richardson with your event details. rebecca.richardson@britishwaterways.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

• The next tourism business meeting will take place during the evening of Thursday 19 January 2006. British Waterways London will be sending out invitations shortly and hope that you are available to discuss business in 2005 and looking forward to what 2006 will bring.

• British Waterways is again co-sponsoring the Inland Waterways Attraction at the 2006 London Boat Show, at Dockland's Excel centre 6-16 January. In 2005 British Waterways' stand recorded 33,000 visits, with 8,000 people taking general literature and asking questions. A further 15,000 brochures were distributed by Waterscape.com.

To take advantage of this key market, BWL will produce a special promotional leaflet for the 2006 show to encourage show visitors to visit London's canal network while they're in the capital, at a relatively quiet period for the tourism industry.

All waterway businesses are being invited to take part in this promotion. If you haven't already received an information pack, please contact Nerissa Bryden to find out more.

For further information about Tourism Business meetings and the London Boat Show promotion, contact: Nerissa Bryden at the address below.

Nerissa Bryden
British Waterways London,
1 Sheldon Square
Paddington Central,
London
W2 6TT
T: 020 7985 7200
F: 020 7985 7201

www.britishwaterways.co.uk/london
Editor: Rebecca Richardson
British Waterways London
T: 020 7985 7215

British Waterways London